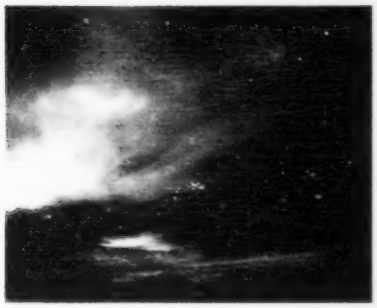
Personal and Family Checklist



Emergencies and disasters can occur anytime, anywhere. Some are seasonal and allow for some preparation; others occur swiftly and without warning. Communications, transportation, utilities, and other essential services could be disrupted by disasters, forcing you to rely initially on your own resources for food, water, first aid, transportation, and shelter.

This pamphlet provides general information on personal and family emergency preparedness for a variety of natural and man-made disasters and emergencies.

Why You Need a Plan

The individual's response comes first. Individuals and families need to be prepared to cope with interruptions in essential services from any cause at any time. The next level of response comes from municipalities. They work closely with other essential service organizations in developing and carrying out emergency plans. Alberta government assistance is brought in when needed. The Alberta government may also request help from the federal government if necessary. Organizations prepare for emergencies with thorough planning. Individuals and families should do the same, based on the kinds of emergencies that can occur in their region and community. Although the emergency incident may vary, the elements of an effective response are often the same. Natural events can include winter storms, fires, floods or tornadoes. Other potential emergencies such as dangerous goods spills are caused by technological or human failures.

Be Informed

The most common emergencies that occur in Alberta are winter storms, fires (home, forest and grass fires), floods, thunderstorms and tornadoes. You can lessen the impact of an emergency or disaster by knowing what to do before, during, and after an incident. Contact your municipal Director of Disaster Services or municipal government office to find out what emergencies or disasters could occur in your area. Ask what you should do to prepare for them. This brochure contains an example of an emergency contact list that you can fill in with the appropriate numbers for your area.

No matter where you live, the following basic preparedness actions can help you in any emergency.

- Learn the warning systems your municipal government uses and what actions to take when you hear them.
- Listen to local radio and television stations for forecasts and emergency instructions. Post the dial/channel listings of these stations for easy access.
- Arrange with neighbours to advise one another of an emergency notification.
- Post emergency phone numbers by every phone.
- Learn your community's evacuation routes.
- Be familiar with your workplace emergency plan and your children's school or day care emergency plans.
- Have written backup care arrangements in place with the school or day care in the event that you can't get there right away in an emergency.
- Learn first aid and CPR.

Insurance

- Insurance for most perils is readily available for homes and their contents, businesses, stock and equipment; farm buildings, livestock and equipment; and vehicles of all types. Check regularly with your insurance agent or broker to ensure you have appropriate and adequate insurance coverage, including any extensions in coverage that may be available, which were not previously.
- Coverage is available for most major disasters, such as fire, lightning strikes, windstorms, hail, tornadoes and others. Overland flood coverage can be added to business policies, but is not generally available for homeowners.
- Most policies can include coverage for damage caused by sewer back-up. Make sure your policy includes sewer back-up insurance.
- Keep a detailed paper and/or photographic/video inventory of your residence or business. Keep it in your emergency kit. It will be invaluable in the event of loss.
- Make sure your insurance policies and related records are in a safe location and easily available after an emergency or disaster.
- The Insurance Bureau of Canada has information on all aspects of insurance. Their Alberta toll free number is 1-800-377-6378.
- Know what your insurance company requires, should you need to make a claim.
- Be aware that government disaster recovery programs will not compensate for damage and loss for which insurance was readily and reasonably available before the disaster occurred.

Develop a Family Emergency Plan

Base your plan on the kind of emergencies that can occur in your region and community. Have a family meeting to discuss potential emergency situations. Talk about what each family member should do to prepare and respond in each situation. Ensure that elderly family members, who may not live with you, are included in your emergency plan.

- Include individuals with special needs in your planning.
- Maintain a list of the family's required medications and prescribed dosages, and

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the name and telephone numbers of family doctors.

- If you use a pacemaker or other medical equipment, keep the style, serial number and other pertinent information with you at all times.
- Keep irreplaceable items such as family photo albums, in a place where they can quickly be accessed if you must leave your home in a hurry.
- If important family papers are kept at home, store them in a portable, fireproof and waterproof container.
- Contact your municipal administration to ensure that your plan is consistent with probable municipal actions.
- If your family owns pets, determine your municipality's policy for pets in an evacuation. Contact your local disaster services office or veterinarian for information.
- Plan how your family will stay in contact if separated by a disaster or emergency.
- Pick 2 meeting places:
  - a location at a safe distance from your home in case of fire;
  - a place outside your neighbourhood in case you cannot return home.

  Ask a relative or friend who lives outside your municipality, to act as a central "point-of contact" for everyone to call.

Audit Your Home

A hazard audit of your home can not only increase your safety but can also help you respond more effectively to an emergency or disaster.

- Review fire safety features such as smoke detectors and how to monitor them.
- Identify all potential exits.
- Check for frayed electrical cords or overloaded circuits.
- Make sure that no flammable materials are kept near electrical equipment or your furnace.
- Learn how to turn off your water, gas and electricity safely.
- Locate the safe areas (interior bathrooms, closets, interior stairwells, and lowest floor level) in your home in case of a tornado.

Maintain a Supply of Food and Emergency Items

A major emergency or disaster could isolate you in your home for several days. Gas or electricity for cooking, heating and refrigeration may not be available. Be prepared with a stock of items for emergency use.

- Medications required by family members such as insulin or prescriptions.
- Foods required for special diets or baby foods.
- Battery-powered radio and flashlight in working order, with extra batteries. (Solar and hand wind-up radios and flashlights are also available.)
- A first aid kit and manual. Your local fire department, Canadian Red Cross chapter or St. John Ambulance office can advise on what items to include in your kit.
- All-purpose fire extinguisher (rated A-B-C).
- Waterproof matches, candles and tin can. Ensure that candles are used safely.
- A five-day supply of canned, packaged, or non-perishable food items for each member of the family. Include a manual can-opener.
- A five-day supply of water for each member of the family sealed in unbreakable containers (replace stored tap water every few months). Adults need at least 1 litre of drinking water per day.
- An alternative heat source and an adequate supply of fuel. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Make sure there is adequate ventilation to prevent the build-up of hazardous fumes.

Vehicle Emergency Kit

Vehicles should be equipped with supplies which could be useful in an emergency.

- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Extra clothing and footwear
- Fire extinguisher (rated A-B-C)
- First aid kit with first aid manual
- Flashlight and batteries
- Gas line antifreeze
- Maps
- Matches and a "survival" candle in a tin can (to warm hands, heat a drink or use as an emergency light)
- Non-perishable high-energy foods (raisins, granola bars, etc).
- Sand
- Shovel
- Solar, wind-up or battery radio
- Tool kit
- Water (bottled)
- Warning light or reflectors

Be Prepared to Evacuate Your Home or Workplace

Do not assume an evacuation will last only a few hours. Plan to evacuate with enough items to keep your family comfortable for at least five days. Consider adding these items to your emergency supplies.

- Warm and waterproof clothing, and any other items appropriate for the time of the year.
- Extra food based on the specific requirements.
- Money and credit cards (money machines may not be working).
- Toys to comfort and amuse the children (favourite toy, stuffed animal, cards).
- Reading material and games.
- Pet food.
- Sleeping bags or blankets, in a waterproof bag.
- Keep your vehicle fuelled.
- Ensure your vehicle is well equipped for winter driving.

Evacuation Procedures During an Emergency

- Keep phone lines open for use by emergency workers.
- Listen to local radio or television broadcasts for emergency instructions and current information.
- Assemble the food and supplies you plan to take with you. Refer to lists of family medications, records and irreplaceable items (see Develop a Family Emergency Plan).
- Follow the instructions of your local authority about whether to switch off utility services. In the case of some gas and propane appliances that are manually operated, it would be wise to shut off the gas supply if the appliance is going to be unattended.

- Follow the instructions and advice of your municipal government. If you are asked to evacuate, do so promptly.
- Travel only on routes that are specified or recommended by your local municipality.
- An emergency reception centre may be set up to provide food, shelter and information to people affected by an emergency. If you are going somewhere other than the reception centre, advise the reception centre or municipal government of your whereabouts.

After the Emergency or Disaster

The dangers associated with a disaster are not over once the flood waters have receded or the tornado has passed. Protect yourself and your family.

- Don't visit the disaster area. You may hinder rescue efforts.
- Monitor local media reports and municipal web pages for information on when it is safe to return to your home. They can also provide other post-incident advice and assistance.
- Drive carefully and watch for debris, dangling or broken wires and damaged bridges and roads. Report problems to police or fire departments.
- Wait until you are advised that it is safe before entering buildings that may have been structurally damaged, and then proceed with caution.
- Use only battery-powered lanterns or flashlights to examine your home for damage, which may contain flammable items. Do not use candles or matches.
- Check for leaking gas pipes in your home. If you smell gas:
  - immediately open windows and doors.
  - turn off the main gas valve.
  - leave the house.
  - notify the gas company from another location, as well as the police and fire department.
  - Do not re-enter the house unless you are told it is safe to do so.
- If electrical appliances are wet (and you are NOT wet or standing in water) turn off the main power switch. Then unplug the wet appliances and have a qualified technician inspect them. With all the wet appliances unplugged, turn on the main power switch. If any fuses blow when power is restored, turn off the main power switch again and have your home checked by a qualified electrician or call your utility company.
- Follow the instructions of your local health unit concerning the use of the use of food and water supplies.
- Check to see that sewage lines are intact before flushing toilets.
- Report damaged water, sewage, and gas lines to the proper authorities.
- Notify your insurance agent or broker if your property was damaged.
- The emotional impacts of disasters on those affected are well known. Pay attention to your feelings and those of your family members. Your regional health authority can provide assistance in coping with trauma resulting from a disaster, or call the Alberta Mental Health Board's Help Line at 1-877-303-2642, toll free (24 hours a day).

Important Phone Numbers

Police _____

Fire _____

Doctor _____

Ambulance _____

_____**'s work #** _____

_____**'s work #** _____

Children's schools _____

_____

_____

Utility companies _____

_____

_____

Neighbours_____

_____

_____

Other _____

_____

Name, address and phone number of an out-of-town relative or friend who can act as a point-of-contact.

_____

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For more information contact:

Emergency Management Alberta
14515-122 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 2W4
Telephone: (780) 422-9000
Or 1-800-272-9600
Web Page:
www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ema/

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